



**Fw: AP on Libby; release from Sen Baucus**  
**Carol Campbell to: Judy Hansen**

*libby - press*

1238068 - R8 SDMS

05/04/2011 07:49 AM

Pls print  
Richard Mylott

----- Original Message -----

**From:** Richard Mylott

**Sent:** 05/03/2011 08:02 PM MDT

**To:** Grandison.lawrence@epa.gov; Sandy Fells; Matthew Allen;  
martin.jim@epa.gov; Carol Rushin; Deborah McKean; Victor Ketellapper; Carol  
Campbell; Libby Faulk; Sonya Pennock; Grandison.lawrence@epa.gov; Bill Murray;  
Steve Wharton

**Subject:** AP on Libby; release from Sen Baucus  
AP article and release from Sen Baucus.

EPA: Mont. town cleaner but asbestos risks persist

Byline: By MATTHEW BROWN

Associated Press  
BILLINGS, Mont.

A preliminary study of an asbestos-plagued Montana town indicates health dangers remain in some areas already addressed once in a federal cleanup that has cost more than \$370 million to date.

Tuesday's release of a long-awaited draft toxicity study for the town of Libby comes more than a decade after the Environmental Protection Agency started its cleanup operation.

Health workers say more than 400 people have been killed over the last several decades in Libby, which is considered the nation's deadliest Superfund site. Asbestos fibers released from a nearby W.R. Grace vermiculite mine once blanketed the town of about 3,000 people.

EPA officials said Tuesday's study confirms Libby's once-deadly ambient air is now safe.

Yet they conceded some homes already addressed by cleanup crews remain a risk and might need to be revisited. Officials suspect those areas have been re-contaminated by homeowners who inadvertently tracked in asbestos from areas not addressed by cleanup crews.

EPA assistant administrator Paul Anastas said the toxicity study was released early to keep residents "fully informed" in Libby and neighboring Troy. The agency has faced withering criticism from Montana officials for past missteps in Libby, including false declarations that areas were safe when in reality significant risks remained.

"This is a major step forward in establishing the science to improve the cleanup of asbestos in Libby and the protection of the families that live here," Anastas said.

The study suggests the cancer risk from Libby's asbestos is relatively similar to the dangers posed by other types of asbestos, EPA officials said. That runs counter to prior assertions by scientists that Libby's unique strain of the mineral was hundreds of times more toxic than asbestos found elsewhere.

Yet the study also contained troubling revelations about non-cancer health risks, showing people can be sickened by inhaling even the slightest trace of the fibers. Commercial landscapers or others who work extensively in yards are at particular risk, the study indicated.

The vermiculite that came from W.R. Grace's Libby mine was shipped around the country for decades and sold as residential insulation under the brand name Zonolite. Tens of millions of homes contain the material, but EPA officials said Tuesday they do not believe any cleanup actions are necessary outside of Libby and Troy, where the material was widely used in gardens, homes and as backfill.

To decrease the potential for recontamination, EPA officials say they plan to begin cleaning alleys between houses and entire neighborhoods instead of individual houses. Also, they plan to pursue a "curb to curb" approach that will no longer make exceptions for homeowners who want parts of their yards left intact.

Libby Mayor Doug Roll said the changes made sense, but will work only if agreed to by property owners who in the past refused the EPA access.

"If you clean all the way around a property that's contaminated, there's a big issue with cross-contamination," Roll said. "I know I'm a little reluctant to let them onto my property, too, after seeing some of the cleanups that have been done."

U.S. Sen. Max Baucus, a Montana Democrat, said the town was depending on the EPA to get the job done right.

"Our kids, grandkids and the economy cannot keep waiting for a clean bill of health," he said. "As history has proven, we've got to stay vigilant, keep holding authorities accountable and demand the best possible future for Libby and the folks of Lincoln County."

In 2009, EPA administrator Lisa Jackson declared a public health emergency in Libby \_ the first of its kind under the federal Superfund law that guides the cleanup of contaminated sites.

Approximately 1,500 people who have lived or worked in Libby are being treated for asbestos-related diseases through a local clinic, the Center for Asbestos Related Diseases. Those illnesses can lead to decreased lung function and the disease asbestosis

Over the last decade, federal contractors have removed contaminated soils and insulation from more than 1,400 homes and businesses in the Libby area.

Another 150 homes are slated for cleanup this summer. That would leave about 200 properties remaining in the federal cleanup plan. Officials say they have been denied access to an additional 600 sites that could be contaminated.

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Office of Communications and Public Involvement  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8  
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----- Forwarded by Richard Mylott/R8/USEPA/US on 05/03/2011 07:58 PM -----

From: Matthew Allen/R8/USEPA/US  
To: mylott.richard@epa.gov  
Date: 05/03/2011 07:13 PM  
Subject: Fw: Fwd: BAUCUS VOWS CONTINUED OVERSIGHT OF EPA CLEANUP IN LIBBY

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Fyi

From: Will Wadley [wwadley@kcfw.com]

Sent: 05/03/2011 07:11 PM CST

To: Matthew Allen

Subject: Fwd: BAUCUS VOWS CONTINUED OVERSIGHT OF EPA CLEANUP IN LIBBY

Will Wadley  
Reporter/KCFW  
4068852054  
[wwadley@kcfw.com](mailto:wwadley@kcfw.com)

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Cyndy Koures <[ckoures@keci.com](mailto:ckoures@keci.com)>  
**Date:** May 3, 2011 3:26:45 PM MDT  
**To:** Will Wadley <[wwadley@kcfw.com](mailto:wwadley@kcfw.com)>  
**Subject: FW: BAUCUS VOWS CONTINUED OVERSIGHT OF EPA CLEANUP IN LIBBY**

FYI

**From:** Weber, Kathy (Baucus) [[mailto:Kathy\\_Weber@baucus.senate.gov](mailto:Kathy_Weber@baucus.senate.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 03, 2011 3:26 PM  
**To:** Weber, Kathy (Baucus)  
**Subject:** BAUCUS VOWS CONTINUED OVERSIGHT OF EPA CLEANUP IN LIBBY

May 3, 2011

\*\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\*\*

**BAUCUS VOWS CONTINUED OVERSIGHT OF  
EPA CLEANUP IN LIBBY**

***Senator Carefully Monitoring Results of Studies, Ongoing Asbestos Contamination Cleanup***

(Washington, D.C.) - Montana's senior U.S. Senator Max Baucus is holding the Environmental Protection Agency accountable as the EPA prepares to unveil the results of studies Senator Baucus had demanded for the community of Libby back in 2006.

At 6:30 this evening at the Libby Memorial Center, the EPA will be joined by the head of the Superfund program at a public forum to share the results of their initial studies and explain what their findings mean for the EPA's cleanup activities in the area. Tonight's meeting is the result of an investigation launched by Baucus in 2006 revealing the EPA had not completed adequate toxicity and epidemiology studies for the community.

Baucus issued the following statement in advance of tonight's meeting:

**"The people of Libby are depending on the EPA getting the job done right. Our kids, grandkids and the economy cannot keep waiting for a clean bill of health. While I'm pleased the EPA is sharing the results of their studies with the community, I will be reviewing those results carefully to make sure the EPA is doing all it can to protect the community. As history has proven, we've got to stay vigilant, keep holding authorities accountable and demand the best possible future for Libby and the folks of Lincoln County."**

#### TIMELINE:

- August, 2006 – Baucus calls for investigation into the Environmental Protection Agency's handling of asbestos contamination in the Libby area. He also demanded transparency by asking the EPA to release its reports of public communication with the community.
- December, 2006 - Baucus threatens to hold all EPA nominees until the EPA agreed to do the necessary studies to ensure Libby gets a clean bill of health.
- December, 2006 - The EPA relents and agrees to complete adequate toxicity and epidemiology studies to complete a risk assessment.
- May 3, 2011 - The EPA shares the initial results of its risk assessment studies with

the community.

Contact: Kate Downen 406-224-5056 or Kathy Weber 406-657-5915

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**Kathy Weber**

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